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ABSTRACT

This paper asserts that what is really basic in education lies first in recognizing what it means to be human, to accept the challenges and pains and joys of being alive, and to attempt not only to preserve but to raise the level of that humanity a notch or so for the next generation. It is suggested that adolescent literature can be a vehicle for those who are struggling to break the bonds of childhood to enter into maturity. Passages from various adolescent novels are quoted which exemplify stages in adolescent development and those problems often encountered during the period of adolescence. A selected, annotated list of adolescent novels is also included. (LL)

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THE BASICS OF/AND INDIVIDUALIZING ADOLESCENT LITERATURE FOR 150 KIDS, MORE OR LESS

by
Beverly Haley

Getting down to the basics with 150 students in an individual way doesn't just "happen." Nor can it happen with all 150--but it can happen with a large number of them when a teacher cares to make it happen.

A few weeks ago, a student handed in a book review that seems both "basic" and "individual." In her summary of The Happy Hooker, Donna felt the responsibility of educating me to the basic terminology of the profession described in the book; therefore, she defined these terms along the way. Her evaluation of the book read something like this:

> I always thought that the easiest and quickest way for a girl to make money would be to be a prostitute. Reading this book made me realize it's not that easy--But I also think it's not really as bad of a job as a lot of people try to make it out to be. . .
> Also, I learned that I think if my husband would ever decide he was tired of me, I'd rather have him go to a prostitute than to have a mistress.

Donna's review is an incisive one. Her individual interpretation of what is basic in this world, based on her own background of experiences, is that two things in life are the most real: first, survival; and next, the male-female relationship in both a physical

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and an emotional context.

The "back to the basics" or "skills without frills" hysteria threatens our survival as human beings in this world. The many crises created by the complexities of our society seem to have thrown us into a maelstrom of indifferent practicality that threatens to suck mankind into the undercurrents of self-destruction.

The January 16 Kiplinger report notes that education is becoming more career oriented. In the same breath, it also informs its readers that job availability is projected to remain low throughout the decade and that the number of job seekers continues to expand.

In a panic to ensure that their children will be able to find jobs, parents frantically demand that schools return to a strict-discipline-and-the-three-r's formula. Somehow these concretes represent some form of stability in the midst of chaos. But these parents (and educators, too) are clutching not at a firm anchor; rather, they are clutching at a bundle of straws. They know not for what they ask.

What is basic--really--in helping today's youth prepare for their tomorrow of adulthood? And what is the role of the English teacher in that process of metamorphosis? And how can a teacher who meets 150 kids daily reach his students as individuals? Some possible answers to these questions are basic to whether adolescents can break through the limiting and limited state of being teenagers and out into a meaningful adulthood to help form the foundations for a higher level of what it means to be human.

Skills and structure are essential. Skills of language for speaking, for writing, and for reading are vital to human beings in communicating both in the present time and place and in crossing the barriers of time and space. But first there must be a need to communicate--there has to be something to be communicated. Like computers, the tools of communication are only as effective as the

mind and the soul behind them.

What is truly basic, then, lies first in recognizing what it means to be human, to accept the challenges and the pains and the joys of being alive, and to attempt not only to preserve but to raise the level of that humanity a notch or so for the next generation. As Jennifer, in the novel Masks by Jay Bennett, says after reading The Great Gatsby, "That was an age of despair and defeat. . . Ours must not turn out so, we must be better people, we've just got to be." (p. 77)

Adolescent literature can be a vehicle for those who are struggling to break the bonds of childhood to enter into maturity. In its narrowest sense, the term "adolescent literature" refers to a body of "young adult" novels, novels written specifically for and about adolescents. One of its advantages is that generally adolescent novels are short. This suits the restless teenager who finds it agonizing to sit still and labor over long books.

The genre has evolved over a period of years--slowly, at first, like all aspects of society; then with the changes and the quantity and quality of changes intensifying at jet speeds. Its development might be compared in some respects to that of the development of science fiction, passing first through a time of relative neglect, then through one of vitriolic attack, and finally to one of resigned acceptance and a halting concession that some of this "garbage" might possibly have some literary merit.

In the larger sense, adolescent literature may be anything adolescents are reading whether its magazines, the daily newspaper, poetry and song lyrics, advertising, drama, or popular and classic adult literature. All of these language experiences vary with the particular level of maturity of the student as well as on his particular set of problems, experiences, and interests.

Another point is that adolescents are not the only readers who can and do enjoy these novels for and about teenagers. Like good writing of any genre, adolescent literature is for everyone. And good adolescent literature constitutes a basic step in the teenage reader's appreciation for the writer's craft as well as for more complex kinds of ideas and literature.

Every age group has its own set of needs in addition to those needs basic to all human beings, but the teens seem to hold one of the most turbulent sets of needs along this journey called life. Adolescence is a time of violent struggle. It is like the struggle of the delicate-winged butterfly to break the hard shell of its imprisoning (but also protecting) cocoon. Those who survive the struggle may soar into clear, bright summer days or risk a thunderstorm; but those who don't, dry up inside the shell, never to see the sunshine or sip the nectar of a buttercup--never to experience life.

What are some of the basic needs of adolescents for this metamorphosis? First, these very special and precious persons are in the precarious process of emerging as individuals; hence, they need guidance and support in sorting out and recognizing and accepting their unique identities. Part of a person's identity is his family, but each must also be his own self, separate and different. Guy in Guy Lenny (by Harry Mazer) expresses the strangeness of this:

> . . . He felt separated from his mother, his father, and Emily, free of their endless talk, their earnest serious looks, their appeals to his "mature nature" to do what was "sensible and best for everyone." The sense of his own strength and separateness was a new feeling, a little strange, even scary, but good. (p. 117)

They are learning, too, that important and vital process of reaching out toward heterosexual relationships with their peers. This is the first step toward their building a family unit of their own--that basic unit of our society that no one ever really "teaches"

them about.

And, they are searching for what they hope may be their life's work--the way in which their unique skills, talents, and interests may be developed for the fulfillment of their potential as human beings and as contributing members of a world community.

Throughout all of this struggle, though, it's important that they not take themselves too seriously; that they see themselves in perspective with the universe and learn to laugh with and at themselves and the world. A sense of humor is basic to survival. Ike Bender, in The Road to Many A Wonder by David Wagoner, has a marvelous sense of humor. He sees his mean, domineering father like this: "Pa was little and loud and mean too, if you got upwind of him too long, but I knew how to keep on his good side, which was behind him."

Adolescents are, by the very nature of being adolescent, involved in experimentation with all kinds of roles and behaviors. They must try on different things to see what fits and what doesn't. They may possess a spirit of adventure--or they may be disillusioned with the world and resort to apathy and "dropping out." They rebel against established authority in their efforts to become independent. At the same time they experience a terrible sense of loneliness and they long for approval and recognition from any and all quarters--from peers first, but also from parents and the community in general.

Suzanne Clauser illustrates this need for peer approval in her novel A Girl Named Sooner. Sooner longs so hurtfully for approval in her new school, that she--without seeming to have a will of her own--is pressed by a crowd of children to be the cause of her pet bird's death. Her stepmother attempts to comfort her when she realizes what has driven Sooner to this:

> To prove Bird's worth, Sooner had allowed him to die. That's what it amounted to, Elizabeth knew. She'd wanted friends so badly, to belong so badly, and she'd learned at school what it would take to buy that friendship. Something of worth. And all she'd had was Bird. (p. 138)

In Mollie Hunter's A Sound of Chariots, Bridie longs so for her father's approval that she submerges her terror of sliding in the snow with the boys to prove to him she is brave. But in the midst of her fear, she perceives that she also grows stronger:

> . . . As her stomach muscles that had been knotted tight with fear relaxed in the flying thrill of her speed, it flashed through her mind that with no fear neither would there have been any of this glory in overcoming. And in the same flash of perception, everything else became clear to her. (p. 76)

Teenagers are alternately progressing or regressing through a series of stages that may drive their parents to treat them in all the ways teenagers wish their parents would not treat them. One moment they are told to be mature, to grow up; the next moment, they are told they are too young for this and too immature for that.

Within the general and particular needs of adolescents are as many individual needs as there are individuals in a class. It is not always easy to detect these needs. Teenagers wear masks--impenetrable, sometimes, even to themselves. So the English teacher must be alert for signals of needs and of a readiness to confront those needs.

Teenagers live primarily in the here and now, and so it seems logical that the "starting point" with them lies in the particular pains and joys of the moment. Literature that describes adolescents confronting problems common to their age group as well as to the human condition in general gives the young reader assurance and comfort in the fact that he is not the only one in the whole world

who ever had a particular problem. He may realize that other people have problems worse than his own, or that they found ways to cope with the problem, or that they tried to solve it in the wrong way. It also takes him out of himself and his own world for a time and into the world of someone either very like or very unlike himself. He learns to "role play" things that could happen to him in the future or possible solutions to what is happening to him now. His imaginative powers are exercised and stretched.

The "numbers game" is the English teacher's greatest obstacle in the attempt to touch something very basic in each of his students. How can he hope to provide all his students with the tools for coping with his life now? for opening new doors and broadening experiences? for showing him that life and love are both arts and must be treated as such? for giving him the desire and the courage and the imagination to become a truly mature person? The percentages say a teacher can't reach them all--but they don't make any rules against trying!

First, the teacher must see and accept his students as individuals. At the same time, he should let the students see him as an individual, too. This can be done on the very basic level of simply looking at him--I mean, really looking at him--and saying "Hello!" either before, during, or after each class period, as the occasion arises naturally. But it must be done consciously and deliberately, too, or it may not happen at all. Other ways can be created out of using a variety of classroom activities like discussions, writing assignments, role-playing, or other group language activities. When an open and accepting atmosphere is established, then communication can occur.

Adolescent literature is another means of becoming acquainted personally with students and of learning what their present values and concerns are. Beginning with a class reading of a novel or short story or poem creates opportunities for discussions that bring out many points of view about particular problems and values. In listening to what others say about the reading, students may have new insights into problems they would not have seen without a group sharing. Awareness and understanding awakens and the spirit is ennobled at the same time that it learns to cope with and accept reality. In turn, there occurs the aspiring to raise the level of that reality.

A teacher who wants to use adolescent literature faces two major enemies: fellow teachers and parents. He has to believe in himself to confront these deterrents. He has to develop a thick skin. The primary objection raised by colleagues is one of "scholarliness" or of aesthetics.

The term "adolescent literature" is in itself one of demeaning connotation, perhaps because that is the connotation associated with the word "adolescence." But the alternative term "young adult" seems just another way of being derogatory.

Beyond the term itself, though, parents may object to the language of many of these novels. They object to the kinds of situations and characters described. But most of all they object to the image of the parent in much of adolescent literature.

A few years ago at an open house I attended, the mother of a high school student trapped me into an isolated corner of the room and, cocktail in hand, said, "My daughter has been reading this book The Pigman and I'd like to know frankly what you think of it."

Unsure of where she might be aiming, I used a noncommittal approach and stated simply that many kids were reading and liking it.

"But," she said, attempting in vain to blow the smoke from her cigarette away from my face, "Are kids today really like that? smoking and drinking and using that kind of language and not showing any respect for adults?"

Overwhelmed by her apparent innocence and hypocrisy, I matter-of-factly asserted that they do indeed do these things to greater or lesser degrees--and so what else is new? Didn't kids in her day do these kinds of things, too?

Admitting that perhaps they did, she felt it still was not so bad because in her day it was not done openly and flagrantly. Besides, she really couldn't believe her Judy could be like "those others."

What really disturbed her, though, was the parents in the novel. "They're so selfish," she said. "And they don't seem to know or care what's happening to their own children. Books shouldn't make parents look bad."

With what was either great control or great cowardice, I bit my tongue and remarked, "Quite a few parents are like that, whether they realize it or not."

I longed to tell her that only a few days earlier in a class discussion of that same novel, a daughter of one of her best friends said passionately, "I wish parents would read this book. A lot of them only care about going to the country club and the bridge table and the golf course. The only time they notice their kids is when the kids do something really good or bad that reflects on their (the parents') image!"

That same winter a teacher in our school's business department complained about the books the students were reading. His main concern was the topic of sex and the use of vulgar language. When

I asked him whether he'd rather have his own children learn about such things in an alley or in an open classroom situation under responsible supervision by a caring teacher, he replied, "The alley. I don't want the school teaching that stuff."

Although I could not agree with him, he did touch a danger area. The attitude of the teacher is extremely important in the handling of any controversial topics in the classroom. It's necessary not to act shocked, to be judgmental, sarcastic, or pompous. It's important to consider the issues of values and priorities in a calm and reasonable tone and also to consider possible deep-rooted emotional effects inherent in any given situation.

A teenager needs to understand, too, that to make mistakes is human and part of growing up. He should not be made to bear a disproportionate burden of guilt about his feelings or his actions. Realizing that others make mistakes, too, can help ease his own guilt and to accept the fact of a mistake.

Role-playing can prevent mistakes. Here is where adolescent literature can be used as a springboard. When a person sets up possible conflict situations and acts them out--first, vicariously through his reading, then through some related group role-playing, and finally through the use of his own imagination, he can "act out" how he might best behave given a particular situation and to see some possible alternatives before a similar situation occurs in his own experience. It's like driving a car defensively--the driver looks ahead and tries to foresee possible points of danger and to see what alternatives he might have should a problem actually develop.

One such problem is the possibility of pregnancy. This is the subject of a number of adolescent novels. The consequences, of course, are deeply emotional. When a teenage girl becomes pregnant out of wedlock, her alternatives are few and none of them is bright. In Paul Zindel's My Darling, My Hamburger, high school senior Liz finally has an abortion. A bitter experience for Liz, her boyfriend Sean is not immune, either. On graduation night, Liz's friend Maggie looks at Sean and thinks:

> . . . He'd have his punishment. . . For the rest of his life he'd remember Liz. He could get married and have children--but from time to time he'd remember. Just before going to sleep, perhaps, in a dream. He'd have to remember Liz and something he couldn't be very proud of. The past wasn't that easy to get away from. (p. 120)

Love is the deepest and most basic human emotion: because of this, it also causes the deepest and most painful kinds of hurt. Learning to love someone of the opposite sex is a necessary step toward the building of a new family unit. But that love is not always sanctioned by society, by custom, or by law. Jane Gilmore Rushing in Mary Dove creates love between a white man and a girl of black extraction in a pioneer setting that does not permit the races to mix.

When Red explains to Mary Dove why they cannot marry, she finds this law of man impossible to understand and to accept. She says:

> "I don't believe it's in that book (the Bible). I always believed everything Papa ever told me about the laws of God, and up to now I believed everything you told me, but I just don't believe it because it don't make no sense. . .
>
> "There can't be a law to make me not love you, Red," she said. "Seems like there's some kind of a law in me that says I got to, and says when you call me I got to come." (pp. 101-2)

Breaking out of the parental home is tough. It's tough for the ones going, and it's tough for the ones letting go. Jimmie Gavin in Leap Before You Look expresses the pain involved:

> . . .How we hurt each other, when we don't want to. . . We hurt each other when because of what went before there is nothing we can do but hurt each other. . .
>
> She cried, for the release that tears bring. Cried for her mother and her father. . .She thought she was crying for everyone she had ever known, and for herself, and for all the world. . (p. 201)

When Rob's father explains to him that they must kill the pig Rob has raised and prized and loved, Rob becomes a man in the novel A Day No Pigs Would Die:

> "That's what being a man is all about, boy. It's just doing what's got to be done."
>
> I felt his big hand touch my face, and it wasn't the hand that killed hogs. It was almost as sweet as Mama's. His hand was rough and cold, and as I opened by eyes to look at it, I could see that his knuckles were dripping with pig blood. It was the hand that just butchered Pinky. He did it. Because he had to. Hated to and had to. And he knew that he'd never have to say to me that he was sorry. . .(p. 129)

Different parents take different ways of helping their children to find their separate identities. In Potok's The Chosen, Danny explains to his friend Reuven:

> ". . . My father himself never talked to me, except when we studied together. He taught me with silence. He taught me to look into myself, to find my own strength, to walk around inside myself in company with my soul. When his people would ask him why he was so silent with his son, he would say to them that he did not like to talk, words are cruel, words play tricks, they distort what is in the heart, they conceal the heart, the heart speaks through silence. One learns of the pain of others by suffering one's own pain, he would say, by turning inside oneself, by finding one's own soul. And it is important to know of pain, he said. It destroys our self-pride, our arrogance, our indifference toward others. It makes us aware of how frail and tiny we are and of how much we must depend upon the Master of the Universe. . ."
> (p. 265)

Teenagers love, hate, obey, and rebel against their parents. They rebel against established authority of many kinds and in many ways. The Chocolate War's hero rebels against conformity, tradition, and the "establishment." There are bullies in all segments of society, but they are more threatening during the growing-up years. Young Jerry, new in a boys' school where everything revolves around a traditional structure (both recognized and hidden), refuses to conform to the tradition of selling boxes of chocolates as a fund-raising project. Janza, a bully and leader of a secret gang, is determined to force Jerry into submission. Jerry knows Janza wants a fight:

> . . . But he didn't want to fight. He didn't want to return to grammar school violence, the cherished honor of the schoolyard that wasn't honor at all, the necessity of proving yourself by bloody noses and black eyes and broken teeth. Mainly, he didn't want to fight for the same reason he wasn't selling the chocolates--he wanted to make his own decisions, do his own thing, like they said. (p. 153)

When the illusions adolescents held about grown-ups when they were children are shattered, that's hard, too. The Catcher in the Rye is a classic example of this. A recent novel by Paul Gallico, The Boy Who Invented the Bubble Gun, exemplifies this theme of the loss of innocence. Marshall, the man who "adopts" young Julian on a cross-country bus trip, betrays Julian at the end of the journey for money. When Julian learns the truth, Marshall feels ashamed but covers his shame and says:

> "What else can I say, kid? Maybe in a way it's a good lesson for afterwards. Never trust anybody, especially a guy like me."
> . . . Julian looked dumbly and miserably into Marshall's eyes and slowly shook his head. This was the most painful and astonishing thing of all he had to endure, to show that he understood and that there were no hard feelings. He felt nothing but a deep and unappeasable sorrow that only the young can experience, the grief of disillusionment and the shattering of trust. (pp. 224-5)

Family structures naturally form the background of novels for adolescents and this provides them with models of behaviors they may want to emulate or to discard. Bradbury's Dandelion Wine links the generations and the family members with strong, positive bonds as do the Chaim Potok novels.

Most young people need first to establish their identities and their independence before seriously undertaking the task of a life work, even though adults have been reminding them of this task since first they toddled. Potok's novels explore this part of the young person's development, showing how both environment and individual talents and interests manifest themselves. Hold Fast to Your Dreams by Catherine Blanton is a simpler, less complex novel suited to younger teens that describes the ambitions of a young Negro girl to become a ballet dancer and of her single-minded determination to achieve her goal.

Thomas Huxley wrote that a true education is one that teaches a person to live in harmony with the laws of nature. Perhaps inherent with that is the intent that man should find joy in the appreciation of being alive. Mr. Malter expresses this thought to his son Reuven in The Chosen:

> ". . . A span of life is nothing. But the man who lives that span, he is something. He can fill that tiny span with meaning, so its quality is immeasurable though its quantity may be insignificant. Do you understand what I am saying? A man must fill his life with meaning, meaning is not automatically given to life. It is hard work to fill one's life with meaning. . ." (pp. 204-5)

Is there anything more "basic" and "individual" than that?

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A SELECTED, ANNOTATED LIST OF ADOLESCENT NOVELS

Aiken, Joan - The Whispering Mountain - Doubleday - for early teens - identity, broken home - values, mystery, fantasy.

Set in Wales, a young boy attempts to break through the rigid barrier set up by the strict grandfather with whom he lives to assert his own identity. A young "gypsy" girl who lives alone with her father helps him.

Arre, John - Message to My Daughter - Pyramid Books - junior high to mid teens - alienation death.

A teenage girl, bitter and resentful toward her stepmother, listens to tapes made years before by her dead mother. These tapes literally bring the dead mother's daughter to realize life.

Arundel, Honor - A Family Failing - Dell - middle teens - identity, broken home - values, commune living, generation gap.

In an English setting, 17 year old Joanna realizes suddenly that her family, once loving and warm and secure, is going off in different directions just at the time when she should be finding her own self and needs the family as an anchor.

Arundel, Honor - The Terrible Temptation - Dell - easy reading for mid and older teens - identity, broken home, alienation.

Jan, English-Welsh, youngest daughter of a widow, begins college with the idea that she will not get herself involved in any personal relationships. She has trouble keeping this resolution but succeeds - to her own pain.

Arundel, Honor - The Blanket Word - Dell - mid teens - alienation, love - values, growing up, death.

This is a sequel to The Terrible Temptation. The fatal illness of Mrs. Meredith brings her four children together to thrash out their guilts and frustrations and to leave Jan with a different view of what a marriage and family mean.

Bennett, Jay - Masks - girls, mid teens - identity, generation gap, first romantic love, WASP - Chinese.

Written in a poetic style. Jennifer's first love creates a real problem between her parents and herself. Peter, a young Chinese-American, faces the same objection from his father. Jennifer, though younger, chooses her love for Peter over her love for her parents. But Peter finds he cannot go agsinst his fathers wishes.

Blanton, Catherine - Hold Fast to Your Dreams - Archway - easy reading-mid teens - striving for a career goal, racial prejudice.

Emmy Lou's mother is dead - she lives in Alabama with her "country doctor" father and her grandmother. To help her toward her burning desire to become a ballerina, her father allows her to spend her senior year of high school in Arizona with an aunt and uncle. Presumably, Arizona did not practice racial prejudice. But Emmy Lou finds out differently.

Blume, Judy - It's Not the End of the World - Dell - easy reading, early teens - identity, broken home.-

Different members of this WASP family react to the inevitable divorce in various stages and ways, eventually coping with the changes and finding new directions.

Bradbury, Ray - Dandelion Wine - Bantam - involved; more mature student - identity: the family, meaning of life and of death.

This is a classic of small town family life told from the point-of-view of twelve year old Douglas who learns during his summer vacation months, about what it really means to be alive after learning about death.

Carpelan, Bo (trans. by Sheila LaFarge) - Bow Island - Dell - easy reading, early teens - identity: getting along with those who are "different".

Set in Sweden during a family's summer vacation, eleven year old Johan learns about himself and life through his experiences with a strong sensitive young girl and an older mentally retarded boy who live on the island.

Chandler, Ruth Forbes - Triple Test for Trudy - Abelard-Schuman - easy reading, early teens - identity: stepmother.

Life in a Florida trailer court with a new and insecure stepmother and a father she adores but hasn't lived with since her mother's death, is filled with trials and tests for Trudy, fresh off her grandparents New England farm.

Childress, Alice - A Hero Ain't Nothin' But a Sandwich - Avon - mid teens, but mature concepts - black ghetto, drugs, stepfather.

Benjie Johnson's life at age thirteen is seen alternately through the points of view of many people closely involved with him - including Benjie himself.

Clauser, Suzanne - A Girl Named Sooner - Avon - more mature teens - growing up, love - in many forms, problems of communication, poverty.

The orphaned Sooner is taken from "Old Mam" the mountain woman who raised her. Placed in the home of a couple unable to have children of their own, the pains and the joys of growing up and of learning to love are tough and also heart warming.

Coatsworth, Elizabeth - The Enchanted - Avon - simple, any age for sensitive readers - identity: going back to the earth.

A story of growing up, or romantic love, of prejudice and of lack of communication, is told in the form of a kind of parable set in New England. Poetic style.

Cormier, Robert - The Chocolate War - Dell - easy reading with some mature concepts - identity: alienation, power structure, death of mother.

A young boy, new in a strict all boys' school, dares to refuse to conform - but finally gives in. He doesn't really understand why he wouldn't conform.

Crane, Caroline - Stranger on the Road - Xerox - junior high, mid teens - broken home, alienation, growing up.

An independent, determined teenage girl, decides to run away from her mother and the new stepfather who is repugnant to her. But when finally she hitchhikes across the United States to her father and stepmother in California, she realizes she will simply have to "endure" with her mother until she is old enough to be independent.

Dizenzo, Patricia - Why Me? - Avon - mid teens - rape.

When Jenny finally forces herself to tell what has happened to her, no one reacts with real compassion or understanding.

Donovan, John - I'll Get There; It Better Be Worth the Trip - Dell - broken home, growing up, homosexuality, alienation.

A young boy must go to live with his divorced career mother after his beloved grandmother's death. His only tie with his happy memories of her is his dog - and life with the dog in a city apartment, with a mother to whom "mothering" is distasteful is uncomfortable. He finds some comfort in a close friend.

Donovan, John - Remove Protective Clothing a Little At a Time - Dell - easy reading, early teens - identity: alienation

Fourteen year old Harry Knight is caught in his mother's frustration (created by a young have-to-marriage) and his father's successful career. The only person he finds he can talk to is an old lady whom he accidentally meets in the park one day. His illusion of her is shattered when he realizes that to survive, she kills the pigeons in the abandoned old building where she lives secretly.

Dunn, Mary Lois - The Man in the Box - Dell - easy reading, early teens - war, loyalty, love, boy-man.

Chau Li abandons his fatherless family to rescue an American soldier (whom the villagers regard in the same manner as an enemy) because it is something that he must do. In the process, he learns love and understanding and becomes a man.

Fitzgerald, John D. - The Great Brain - A series by Dal Press - ages 9-13, easy reading - family life, humor, being "different".

The hilarious and heart warming adventures of three boys in a Catholic family living in a Mormon town. The oldest, "The Great Brain", is true to his nickname and learns to survive through his wits - but also his natural sense of justice and his love for the "underdog".

Gallico, Paul - The Boy Who Invented the Bubble Gun - Dell - average reading, any age - Alienation-father-son - identity: loss of innocence.

A coast-to-coast bus ride to patent an invention for the sake of gaining his father's respect and attention leads young Julian on a series of adventures that teach him about real life.

Green, Hannah - I Never Promised You A Rose Garden - New American Library - mid to older teens - mental illness, prejudice, growing up.

Life in a mental institution is described by a teenage girl who found life and prejudice in the real world overwhelming.

Hall, Lynn - Too Near the Sun - Dell Laurel Leaf - mid teens, average reading - identity: alienation, commune living, historical.

Set in Iowa in the late 1800's, the story of seventeen year old Armel Dupree, is based on fact. Armel rebles against his parents and his religion when he realizes the weaknesses of their commune life.

Heinlein, Robert - Starman Jones - Ballantine - early mid adolescence, easy reading but some mature values- values, identity-loss of innocence, broken home, first awareness of opposite sex.

Although labeled as science fiction, this novel of the future portrays the universal realities of life and makes a careful examination of character and of values.

Hinton, S. E. - The Outsiders - Dell - easy reading, all teens - alienation, "misfits", growing up, violence - values: nervous breakdown, death.

Ponyboy belongs to the "outside" group in a large city school. Cherry is in the "in" group and that makes all the difference. All teens love this book for its excitement, characters, and values.

Hinton, S. E. - That Was Then, This Is Now - Dell - mid teens - alienation, loyalties - values: drugs, crime.

Bryon lives with his mother and foster brother in a poor, crowded city area. He experiences conflicts of values and loyalties in his friendships and with his girl friend.

Hunt, Irene - Up A Road Slowly - Tempo - junior high, mid teens (girls) - values: young love, friendships - growing up in an aunts house.

Hunter, Mollie - A Sound of Summer - Avon - any age - poetic style, more mature insights - growing up, death, class prejudice, the family identity.

Bridie learns about death and growing up the hard way when her beloved father dies. A poignant story that takes place in a small Irish town.

Johnston, William - Echoes of A Summer - Ballantine - junior high, mid teens - death.

The novel revolves around the dying months of twelve year old Deirdre and the various kinds of stress and conflicts that arise in addition to the pain and emptiness of impending loss.

Jones, Cordelia - A Cat Called Camouflage - S. G. Phillips - early adolescence, easy reading - identity: growing up, "misfits" - broken home

A young English girl is not told why her parents are separating and is simply expected to make drastic changes in her life style. Resenting her parents, Ruth learns to like her new life in the country and gains the friendship of two other "loners."

Kerr, M. E. - If I Love You Am I Trapped Forever - Dell - early mid teens, easy reading - identity: broken home, boy-girl.

Alan, a senior in high school, resents his father for deserting the family - learns and is disillusioned about the "love life" of adults.

Kerr, M. E. - The Son of Someone Famous - Ballantine - growing up - identity: broken homes, "misfits".

It isn't easy to be the son of a famous man, nor is it easy to grow up in an all female household. Adam and Brenda Belle form their own private club and invent ways to be happy with themselves.

Klein, Norma - Mom, the Wolfman, and Me - Avon - early teens, easy reading - broken home, growing up.

A delightful, warmly human account of a young girl who is the daughter of an unwed mother. They have an unusual and fine relationship - so when the mother decides to marry, an uncomfortable adjustment is inevitable.

Klein, Norma - Taking Sides - Avon - junior high, easy reading - divorce, growing up.

Nearly thirteen year old Nelda and her younger brother Hugo move back and forth between city and rural life styles when they take turns living with their divorced parents.

Lyle, Katie Letcher - I Will Go Barefoot All Summer For You - Dell - orphan - identity: first love.

During her thirteenth summer, Jessie is a mixture of emotions: love and hate, rebellion, bitterness and resentment, longing for knowledge of herself and of life.

Mathis, Sharon Bell - Teacup Full of Roses - Avon - more mature teens, average reading - prejudice (black), poverty, growing up, drugs.

Poverty and prejudice make growing up difficult in this black family. This well written novel is poignant and real.

Mazer, Harry - Guy Lenny - Delacorte Press - early mid teens; easy reading - broken home, growing up.

A conflict develops when Guy's father decides to re-marry after years alone with Guy after Guy's mothers desertion. Guy is forced to leave his hero father to live with the mother he has never known and her retired military husband.

Morrison, Toni - The Bluest Eye - Pocket Books - mature readers - growing up black, poverty, incest.

A poetically written, sensitive story of poverty and ignorance and prejudice. An ugly young black girl's only wish is to have blue eyes so she will be beautiful.

Neufeld, John - Edgar Allan - Signet - early teens, easy reading, some mature values - adoption - values: prejudice.

A well meaning white minister's family decides to keep a black foster child. But prejudice breaks them and they give the child up. The other children in the family fear the parents may give them away too.

Neufeld, John - Lisa, Bright and Dark - Signet - mental illness.

Peck, Robert Newton - A Day No Pigs Would Die - Dell - early teens, easy reading - life and death - identity: growing up, Shaker religion.

Rob's parents are poor and plain, but there is great love and great joy in being alive. Rob must become a man when his father dies.

Peck, Robert Newton - Millie's Boy - Dell - mid teens - growing up, violence, death, unwed mother.

When sixteen year old Tit's mother is murdered, he sets out to find his true identity and to establish his independence.

Peck, Richard - Representing Super Doll - Avon - girls, early mid teens, easy reading .

What happens when a teenage girl is pressured into being what her mother wants her to be. Problem of adjusting from country to town life explored through protagonist.

Platt, Kin - The Boy Who Could Make Himself Disappear - Dell - junior high - broken home, alienation, mental illness.

When a young boy is loved neither by his mother nor his father, no other well-meaning adults in his life can replace that love. The result is mental breakdown.

Potok, Chaim - The Chosen - Fawcett - mid to older adolescence and adult - growing-up, friendship, prejudice, no mother, father-son.

Two teenage boys on opposing baseball teams become fast friends in spite of the differences in their beliefs in Judaism. Sensitive, warm, human style about man's most basic emotions.

Potok, Chaim - The Promise - Fawcett - mid adolescence through adult - friendship, prejudice, mental illness, family relationships, maturation.

A sequel to The Chosen, the two friends graduate from high school, go to college and make decisions about their lifes works. Danny, who rebels against his father's choice of career for him, decides on psychiatry; wants to be a teacher like his father.

Potok, Chaim - My Name Is Asher Leo - Fawcett - mid adolescence to adult - the artistic temp., roles of family, mental breakdown.

Mother, father, and son each goes against strong Jewish traditions in one form or another while trying to remain with the structure. Reveals family stress and the unyielding, compelling force of a young artist growing up.

Richter, Hans Peter - I Was There - Dell - junior high and up - growing up, Hitler youth, loyalties.

The narrator recalls his growing-up as a young teenager during Hitler's Youth Movement; reveals how friends become enemies, how family loyalties were affected, the question of loyalty to the government.

Rushing, Jane Gilmore - Mary Dove - Avon - simple reading but some mature concepts - love, basic values, growing up, loyalty, prejudice, loss of innocence.

A young girl, completely innocent and secluded from the world, loses her father unexpectedly and is left to try to survive alone in an isolated mountain area. She meets and falls in love with the man she will marry. They are driven by prejudice out of the only home Mary Dove has ever known.

Sleator, William - Blackbriar - Avon - easy reading, mid adolescent - growing up, orphan.

Basically a mystery, this novel also shows character development and relationships, a young boy learning about relating to the opposite sex, and of his growing up. Setting is an isolated spot in England. A loving boy and his guardian settle in to a new situation after leaving the city.

Smith, Patrick D. - Forever Island - Dell - easy reading, junior high - growing up - values: mental retardation.

A young boy learns basic values, new relationships, and an understanding and compassion toward a mentally retarded young man during his family's summer vacation.

Stolz - Leap Before You Look - Dell - early-mid adolescence - divorce, growing up, identity.

Well written, told from young teenage girl's point of view who tries to fight then understand, her parents alienation from each other. At the same time she faces the problems of growing up and of learning about love for herself.

Thomas, Audrey - Songs My Mother Taught Me - Ballantine - older adolescence-adult, more complex ideas - alienation, growing up, loneliness, mental illness.

A young girl hates her artificial family situation, loses her innocence, and discovers through a summer job in working with the mentally ill that they are the ones with values that are real.

Wagner, Robin S. - Sarah T., Portrait of A Teenage Alcoholic - Ballantine - easy reading; early adolescence - alcoholism, broken home, alienation, growing up, loneliness.

Alcoholism often happens accidentally and innocentlyand to the very young. Loneliness and alienation apparently trigger the situation.

Wojciechowska, Maia - A Kingdom In A Horse - Harper & Row - easy reading; early adolescence - alienation, growing up, no mother.

A young boy feels betrayed when his father decides they'll settle down in a small community rather than continue in a circus life as the father had promised.

Wojciechowska, Maia - Don't Play Dead Before You Have To - Dell - early to mid alodescence - alienation, divorce, growing up.

A fifteen year old boy baby sits for a younger, wealthier boy and forsees problems when the boys mother becomes more successful in her career than the father.

Woodford, Peggy - Please Don't Go - Avon - mid adolescence - growing up, first love, death.

A young English exchange student feels inferior to her host sister - gains confidence in her own identity - learns different kinds of love, then watches the lively young man she learns to love die.

Zindel, Paul - My Darling, My Hamburger - Bantam - mid teenage; easy to read - alienation, broken home, loyalties; values, sex, love, abortion.

High school senior Liz resents her mother and her new stepfather. She seeks love and loyalty through her best friend and her boyfriend Sean. When Liz becomes pregnant, she feels she can marry and be freed from her mother; but Sean takes his fathers advice and pays Liz to have an abortion.

Zindel, Paul - The Pigman - Dell - mid teens; easy to read - alienation, growing up, death, love, values.

Self-centered parents drive John and Lorraine to foolish pranks. One of these pranks leads them to an old widower whom they call "The Pigman" and who becomes someone who really listens to and cares for them. But more "fun and games" for John and Lorraine may have been the cause of The Pigman's heart attack and death.

NOVELS ABOUT ADOLESCENTS AND ADULTS THAT ARE "CLASSICS"

Agee, James - A Death in the Family

Borland, Hal - When the Legends Die

Bradbury, Ray - Dandelion Wine

Fields, Jeff - A Cry of Angels

Lee, Harper - To Kill A Mockingbird

Parks, Gordon - The Learning Tree

Salinger - The Catcher in the Rye

Saroyan, William - The Human Comedy

Wagoner, David - The Road to Many A Wonder